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Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

Letter dated 23 September 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward the communiqué issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the New Agenda Coalition (Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden) on 22 September 1999, with regard to item 76 (r) of the agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I would be grateful if the attached communiqué could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ahmed **Aboul Gheit**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

99-29475 (E) 121099

Annex

Communiqué issued by the foreign ministerial level meeting of the New Agenda Coalition in New York on 22 September 1999

A meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden was held today to take stock of progress on their joint initiative: towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda, as well as to consider future action in the United Nations and other international fora.

The Ministers noted that a degree of complacency had crept into the international push for progress on nuclear disarmament. They examined the contribution which the new agenda had made to refreshing the debate on the nuclear disarmament imperative. They reiterated their concern over the absence of a definitive engagement to embark on a seamless process which could lead to the early elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Ministers considered the further steps they would take to advance the New Agenda and the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. They recalled that the resolution they had launched in the General Assembly the previous year had been co-sponsored by 32 delegations and adopted by a large majority of the General Assembly. They noted the positive response to the contribution which the New Agenda Coalition had made at the third session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the co-sponsorship by 44 delegations of their proposals tabled at the session.

The Ministers noted that a fundamental shift in approach was required to push the nuclear disarmament agenda forward. The new agenda would continue to urge the five nuclear weapon States to make an unequivocal undertaking at the highest political level to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. This undertaking should be manifested through an accelerated process of negotiations, geared towards achieving nuclear disarmament, to which the five nuclear weapon States are committed under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Ministers also shared their concerns at the effects of events in South Asia on nuclear disarmament. They reiterated their call in the new agenda resolution on the three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and have not yet adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to renounce the nuclear weapons option, and to adhere unconditionally and without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and to take all necessary measures which flow from adherence to that instrument.

The Ministers acknowledged that some progress on nuclear arms reductions was being achieved and that positive steps had been taken to enhance strategic stability by some of the five nuclear weapon States. They reiterated their call on the five nuclear weapon States to take such interim steps as were feasible to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. They considered that that would significantly underpin the process leading to nuclear disarmament.

The Ministers confirmed that a draft resolution would again be tabled in the First Committee of the current session of the General Assembly, the text of which they were submitting to potential co-sponsors.